



CSCanada

International Business and Management

Vol. 13, No. 3, 2016, pp. 22-26

DOI:10.3968/9037

ISSN 1923-841X [Print]

ISSN 1923-8428 [Online]

www.cscanada.netwww.cscanada.org

A Study on the Symbiosis between Tourism Scenic Spot and Local Community Development—A Case Study of Shawan Ancient Town

YANG Dan^{[a],*}

^[a]School of Foreign Languages, China West Normal University, Nanchong Sichuan, China.

*Corresponding author.

Received 20 September 2016; accepted 17 November 2016

Published online 31 December 2016

Abstract

Based on the symbiosis theory, taking Shawan Ancient Town in Panyu as an example, this paper explores the current situation of the scenic spot and community of Shawan Ancient Town by conducting the field investigation, and analyzes its existing problems and existing symbiosis mode. According to the field investigation and analysis, the relationship between the scenic spot and the community of Shawan Ancient Town is currently in the stage of commensalism which is in favor of the scenic spot, and has the potential to develop to the stage of mutualism. Finally, this paper adopts the symbiosis theory to analyze and explore the path and solution of harmonious development between scenic spot and community as well as the way to mutualism with the goal of harmonious sustainable development between scenic spot and community.

Key words: Scenic spot; Community; Harmony; Contradiction; Mutualism

Yang, D. (2016). A Study on the Symbiosis between Tourism Scenic Spot and Local Community Development—A Case Study of Shawan Ancient Town. *International Business and Management*, 13(3), 22-26. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/ibm/article/view/9037> DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/9037>

INTRODUCTION

Tourism is one of the fastest-growing emerging industries in the world, and is known as the “sunrise industry.” After the reform and opening up, as China's economy continues to grow rapidly, and the initiative to build a moderately prosperous society has being continuously

pushed forward, China's tourism industry has gained a good momentum of development and has grown to be an indispensable pillar industry in domestic. The rapid development of the tourism industry makes the tourist scenic spots appear in many places. While the development of the scenic spots brings benefits to the development of the local community, it also causes many contradictions and conflicts. As one of the core stakeholders in the development of the scenic spots (Jiang, 2007), it is of particular importance to pay attention to and handle the interest demands of the tourist community residents and the sustainable development of tourist attractions and local communities. This study aims to achieve harmonious and sustainable development between scenic spot and community, and analyzes the symbiotic relationship between scenic spot and local community by using the symbiosis theory in hope of finding out the countermeasures to make the both areas develop deeper, achieve mutual benefit and harmonious mutualism.

By reviewing relevant literatures, the study on tourism scenic spot and community development, Sun and Ma (2007) sorted and made definition to the relevant concepts and types of scenic spots and communities, and further analyzed the theory of harmonious development between scenic spots and communities, and put forward the concept to build scenic spot-community harmonious development mechanism. In terms of the study on the harmonious development of the Laosan Scenic Spot and the community, Wu (2009) proposed to intensify the concept of harmonious development of the scenic spot-community, and put forward some suggestions for the harmonious development of the scenic spots and the community. With respect to the use of symbiosis theory in the tourism disciplines, Yuan (1998) application of symbiosis theory to analyze existing problems between the small economy and urban commercial banks in China as well as the countermeasures is the earliest research on the concept of symbiosis and related theories in China. Since then, some scholars in China have begun to introduce the concept and theory of symbiosis into the tourism

disciplines with the research perspective mainly focusing on the regional tourism competition and cooperation, the symbiosis of tourism development and protection as well as symbiosis and sustainable development industry and other aspects. Zhong (2001) and Wu (2008) respectively used the connotation of “symbiosis” to explain the essence of tourism symbiosis and put forward the main form of tourism symbiosis.

From what we have discussed above, this paper, on the basis of the previous studies on the development of scenic spots and local community, will analyze how to achieve a more harmonious symbiosis between the scenic spots and the local community by using symbiosis theory.

1. SYMBIOSIS THEORY OF SCENIC SPOT AND LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

1.1 An Overview of Symbiosis Theory

Symbiosis is the basic concept of ecology, firstly put forward by the German mycologist Anton Debarry in the study of fungi in 1879, then it was improved by Phototoxic and Feminism and other people, and formed a systematic symbiosis theory then (Ji, 2011). In general, symbiosis is composed of three elements: symbiosis unit, symbiosis mode and symbiosis environment. Among them, symbiosis unit serves as the foundation, symbiosis mode as the key and symbiosis environment as important external condition (Guo, 2011). Collaboration and cooperation are the essence of symbiosis, and we can realize the mutual benefit, interdependence and living together of the symbiotic unit through cooperative competition, and finally realize the “win-win” or “multi-win” relationship.

In recent years, symbiosis theory is widely used in various industries. In China, Yuan (1998) directly extended the concept of symbiosis of biology and related theories to China's social sciences, and proposed that symbiosis is not only a biological phenomenon, but also a social phenomenon (He, 2007). This study applied the theory of symbiosis to tourism research, serving as theory and method to analyze reciprocal development between the scenic spot and community.

1.2 The Symbiotic Relationship between the Scenic Spot and Local Community Development

Today, the type of scenic-community attractions are developing dramatically. However, along with such an alarming pace of development, the immaturity and contradictions between the scenic spots and the development of local communities become increasingly prominent. The ancient town, the ancient city and the ancient village of this type often presents close overlapping of scenic spots and communities. The development of such social folk scenic spot which needs the participation of communities, except attaching much importance to the contradictions and balance between

the development and protection of the scenic spots, the living conditions of local residents, the attitude and the perception of the development of the scenic spot are also the even more prominent problems. Therefore, in order to find a suitable development model, it is of vital importance to develop the scenic spots rationally to achieve a win-win situation between the scenic spot and community, and try to apply the symbiosis theory to the reciprocal and harmonious development between scenic spot and community.

Symbiotic behavior mode includes parasitism, commensalism, asymmetric symbiosis and symmetry symbiosis. Parasitic patterns are of randomness and instability in the scenic-community development, such a symbiotic relationship is not suitable for the common development of scenic spots and communities (Ji, 2011). Whereas, in the commensalism mode, one party obtains greater benefits but has nothing to do with the profits of the other side, this commensalism mode is also of instability to the development of the scenic spots and communities, and is not the optimal symbiotic mode. Asymmetric mutualism model benefits both sides of the scenic spot and community infinitely, symbiotic relationship is stable and inevitable, but the asymmetry of the mechanism will lead to the asynchronism of the evolution, therefore, this mode will inevitably develop more reasonable and stable. The symmetry symbiotic relationship is stable and the evolution of symbiotic unit is synchronous. Therefore, symmetry symbiosis is an ideal pattern of common development of scenic spots and communities, and it is a long-term coexistence target model of the core community stakeholders.

Table 1
Comparison of Three Symbiotic Relationships

Symbiotic Relationship	Characteristics	Influences
Parasitism	1. without energy production 2. host-parasite render energy gratis 3. benefits to host evolution and is not conducive to parasite evolution	1. is of randomness and instability 2. is not suitable for the development of the scenic spots and communities 3. needs to improve symbiotic relationship
Commensalism	1. new energy production 2. one Party's obtaining of profits is not harmful for the other party 3. is conducive to the evolution of the party obtaining profits, and is harmful for the party without obtaining profits when there are no compensation measures	1. can facilitate the scenic-community development 2. is of instability 3. needs to further improve symbiotic relationship
Mutualism	1. both parties obtaining profits 2. both parties evolve synchronously	1. has a long-term stable and effective relationship 2. both scenic spots and communities obtaining profits and achieving harmonious development

2. A CASE STUDY OF THE SYMBIOSIS OF SHAWAN ANCIENT TOWN AND LOCAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Shawan Town is under the jurisdiction of Panyu District, Guangzhou city with a total area of 52.7 square kilometers, which boasts a population of 120,000. Shawan ancient town tourism area covers an area of 2300 mu (about 153,3180 square meters), of which the tourism core area accounts for an area of about 265 mu (about 176,649 square meters). Shawan ancient town left a large number of ancestral halls, temples and other ancient buildings and commercial sites as well as residential sites. Local features include music, Piaose, Dralion, orchids, food and so on. In 2005, Shanwa ancient town was award by the National Ministry of Construction and the State Bureau of Cultural Relics as “China’s Historical and Cultural Towns.” In June, 2008, Guangzhou Shawan Ancient Town Tourism Development Co., Ltd. was established, and the tourism industry of Shawan Town was transferred to the stage of cooperation between government and enterprises. In June, 2011, Shawan ancient town protection project was officially launched, the investments in town renovation and planning and construction has totaled 160 million (Hao, 2008).

2.1 Satisfaction and Potential Demands of Community Public Benefit from the Scenic Spots

A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed in January and February 2016, and a total of 73 valid questionnaires were returned, with a response rate of 73 percent. Of which male accounted for 50.68 percent and female accounted for 49.32 percent. Most of the visitors lived in the scenic area for more than 5 years, wherein 31.51 percent of people lived for 5 to 10 years, 61.64 percent of people lived for more than 10 years, hence, it had a certain representation. According to the survey results, the vast majority of residents believed that the development of scenic spots only brought a small number of people benefits. Residents were not so concerned the development of the scenic spots. According to the survey and analysis, the benefits to the community public mainly reflected in the following aspects:

Economic impact

Of the 73 valid questionnaires, 27.4 percent of residents indicated an increase in income and 72 percent indicated no change. 31.5 percent of the residents engaged in the tourism industry and related to the scenic area of Shawan ancient town, they are mainly engaged in shops, restaurants or scenic area staff, of which the largest proportion of catering industry accounted for 39.1percent, while the staff in shops and scenic areas accounted for 26.1percent. Although the development of the scenic spots has brought benefits to the residents, it only benefits a small part of the population. After the development of scenic spots, for those residents occupation related to

Shawan scenic area, 95 percent of them have achieved an increase in income, and 5 percent of them have no change in income. The majority of the residents engaged in the tourism industry have a relative increase in income, only a small part of the residents engaged in tourism have no increase in income although they engage in tourism industry. Therefore, the residents’ view of points to the economic impact in scenic spots varies from person to person. Because the Shawan's food culture is relatively good, some operators of catering shops in the scenic area have achieved a substantial increase in income after the development of the scenic spots, and they are especially satisfied with the changes that scenic spots bring them.

In addition, it is known from the interview that the land problem in the scenic spots is also prominent, because relevant compensation system to rent land in the scenic spots is not perfect, it is difficult for the residents to accept, and protests also took place before. After the development, Shawan scenic area introduced the relevant system, and also had strict construction management regulations, resulting in some residents to modify the new plan to build the house blocked.

Social Environment and Cultural Influence

The survey results showed that 87.67 percent of residents said that the flow of people increased after the development of scenic areas, and 60.27 percent of residents said that resources circulation with the outside world was strengthened. The majority of residents said that they were welcome to these social environmental changes that the scenic areas brought them. 30.1 percent of residents contended that the arrival of tourists to a certain extent is conducive to the residents to understand the outside culture. There are more opportunities to come in contact with visitors from different places, broaden horizons and experience foreign cultures.

Infrastructure Construction

After the construction of scenic areas, 43.8 percent of residents said that the road quality has been improved, construction of sewage pipe network and floor tiles repairing make the residents' living more convenient. In addition, upgrading of the river management and greening has certain improvement to the living environment. But some unreasonable infrastructure construction in the scenic area also makes residents dissatisfy.

Overall, the benefits situation of the community residents in the Shawan Ancient Town is not ideal. On the one hand, the community residents need to bear the a variety of impact that the development of scenic spots bring them, on the other hand, they need to accept or even change a way of life, which is a great test for the residents. Although residents have benefited in some aspects, and there have some improvement in their lives, most people are not satisfied with the changes that the scenic area brought to their lives, of which 72.6 percent of the residents argued that scenic spots development only benefits a small number of people.

Evaluation on Symbiotic Relationship between Scenic Spot and Local Community in Shawan Ancient Town

Symbiotic behavior patterns include parasitism, commensalism, asymmetric symbiosis and symmetry symbiosis. According to the current empirical study on the scenic area of Shawan Ancient Town, the existing main symbiosis mode of the ancient town belongs to commensalism mode. In the commensalism mode, although one party gets bigger benefit, it has no influence on the other party, this model will make the development of scenic area and community unstable, and is not the optimal symbiotic mode.

Shawan Ancient Town scenic area did not reach a consensus with the residents on reasonable distribution of interests, except a small number of residents get dividends from the land rental, the majority of residents get no relevant compensation. Although the scenic area of Shawan also provides many jobs for the local community, in fact it can only provide limited positions because of the small quantity of tourists and not much income, and it are those people who have social connections with the management personnel that can have the opportunities to get jobs in the scenic area. It is especially hard for the ordinary people to get jobs, which result in a certain degree of unfairness. On the other hand, although the shops and restaurant can have handsome income, for the depth and width of the development in scenic spots is not enough, it also just provides a limited number of shops, therefore, the opportunities to do businesses are especially rare. What's more, the infrastructure construction of the scenic area of Shawan Town also has the problems of relatively small scale, incomplete supporting projects and insufficient scale of construction, and the traffic accessibility is also to be improved.

The current commensalism mode of Shawan Ancient Town is to be re-adjusted. Although the development of the scenic area, to a certain extent, promotes community development, because of instability of commensalism, it is not conducive to scenic-community long-term and effective symbiotic development. Therefore, it is necessary to adjust and improve the existing symbiosis mode of Shawan Town towards a more harmonious, reasonable and stable direction.

3. DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

3.1 The Improvements of Symbiotic Relationship between Scenic Spot and Community Development

Scenic spot and community development are in commensalism, the scenic spot is the beneficiary side, the community is not profitable or in a low level of profit, the new energy or value arising from commensalism relationship will tend to transfer to one party in the symbiotic relationship. Such a "commensalism" mode will inevitably lead to the instability and randomness in

symbiotic relationship, and finally lead to the emergence of "intermittent". Hence, this mode is also bound to move towards a more reasonable and more stable direction.

In order to make the scenic-community develop more stable in the long run, here we hope that the scenic-community symbiotic relationship can be improved from commensalism to mutualism. Symbiotic unit in the mutualism can be mutually-dependent and mutually-beneficial, symbiotic unit can evolve synchronously. Mutualism mode is the most efficient and stable mode in symbiosis system, and any systems with mutualism mode will expand the scope of symbiosis and improve the profitability. If the development of scenic area and community in a mutually beneficial symbiosis, while the scenic spots get great benefits, the community will also obtain great benefits, and the interests will exist stably in a long run. Therefore, it had better that the development of scenic spots and communities can transform from commensalism mode to long-term stable mutualism mode.

3.2 The Relevant Measures to Achieve Mutualism Mode

The Development of Scenic Spots Drives Economic Development of the Community

The tourism industry not only promotes employment, but also has low employment cost and technical threshold, and has strong ability to absorb labor, thus giving impetus to the local economy. Therefore, the scenic area should create and increase employment and business opportunities to attract community residents to take up occupations. The scenic tourism industry is the way to solve the problem of overpopulation of community and alleviate the employment pressure of community. In addition, the relevant person in charge can also provide training for community residents, improve the competitiveness of the residents to better integrate into the tourism industry.

Try to Deal with the Interests Demands of the Residents

The rational interest's allocation system should be established to improve the proportion of residents' tourism revenue. Meanwhile, the relevant interest supervision committee can be set up, which is mainly used to listen to the interests demands of the community residents, meet the needs of the expression of the interests of the community residents, and also serves as an important channel to explore the solution to the interests protection of the community (Ji, 2011). By doing so, it can effectively mobilize community residents to participate in scenic development initiative, and is conducive to scenic and community mutual benefit and symbiosis.

Infrastructure and Environmental Improvements

In addition to promoting community development through economic development, it is also feasible to improve the compensation degree to the residents through improving the infrastructure construction and

environment. Improve the road quality in the community, improve the living environment of residents; Improve the transportation system and transportation facilities, the shuttle bus back and forth from Shawan Scenic Spot to the downtown area can be added, it will not only meet tourist demands to come to Shawan scenic spots but also provide convenience for residents travel.

Improve the community environment including garbage, waste water treatment and remediation of rivers, green upgrades. Pay more attention to environmental sustainable development so that community residents can share the fruits of environmental governance. Additional parks, community leisure centers, benches, recreational fitness facilities and other recreational facilities are also necessary. The establishments of security rooms, medical stations, supermarkets and other infrastructure facilities are conducive to improve the residents' quality of life.

Pay Attention to the Protection and Continuation of Traditional Culture

The unique culture of the ancestral hall is one of the characteristics attracting tourists in Shawan Scenic Area. Attaching importance to and carrying forward the traditional culture is not only helpful to the development of the scenic spot, but also helps the locals to retain and promote the local culture. In the protection of traditional culture, if the scenic area and the community can reach a consensus, it will serve as an important bridge and catalyst for the common development, and it can effectively mobilize community residents' enthusiasm and sense of mission, thus making them more deeply participate in the development of scenic spots.

Promote the Integration of Culture and Values

The development of the scenic area brings a lot of foreign cultures to the community. The residents and tourists can deepen their mutual understanding and recognition through cultural communication, and promote the integration of local culture and foreign culture, it is also conducive to promoting the mutualism development of scenic-community.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, we use the symbiosis theory to analyze the landscape area and the local community of Shawan

Town, and find that the Shawan Town is in commensalism mode. The instability and randomness of the mode are not conducive to the sustainable development of the scenic area and the community. Therefore, on the premise of harmonious development of the scenic area and the community, this paper puts forward the reciprocal mutualism model of the scenic-community and proposes the main countermeasure and the related measures according to the symbiosis mode. Through the case study of Shawan Ancient Town, it provides some reference for the harmonious and sustainable development of other scenic spots-community-type tourist attractions in China.

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